Implementation of the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement of 1987

1597. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had discussed with the Sri Lankan Government about the Sri Lankan Navy's action against Indian fishermen, the return of Sri Lankan refugees and the implementation of Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement regarding Sri Lanka Tamils and if so, what are the details; and

(b) what steps are being taken to implement the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987 to protect the interests of Sri Lankan Tamils?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. These issues were raised during the visit to New Delhi of the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister from 5th to 7th January, 1992.

The Sri Lanka side assured us that necessary steps had been taken to avoid recurrence in future of incidents involving Sri Lanka Navy's action against Indian fishermen inadvertently crossing the international maritime boundary.

Both sides agreed to take appropriate steps for ensuring an early and voluntary return of Tamil refugees presently in India. Following the agreement, upto March 1992, 5852 refugees have been voluntarily repatriated to Sri Lanka.

On the solution to the ethnic problem we reiterated that the political framework created by the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution, following the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement, remains a constructive point of reference for any future negotiations.

Re-opening of regional passport Office, Srinagar

1598. SHRI SHABBIR AHMAD SALARIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) by when the Regional Passport Office, Srinagar is going to be re-opened; and

(b) if no specific date is given, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) The Passport Office, Srinagar will be reopened as soon as prevailing situation in Jammu & Kashmir improves.

Pakistani Claim over India's land

1599. SHRI SHABBIR AHMAD SALARIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan holds control of Gilgit and Pakistan of Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) whether Pakistan claims said areas as its own territory; and

(c) if so, what is the reaction of Government of India in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Pakistan is in illegal occupation of Gilgit and Baltistan which are part of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir.

(b) Government are aware of reported statements by Pakistani leaders in this regard.

(c) Government's consistent position is that juridically and constitutionally the territories of Gilgit and Baltistan in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir are parts of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir.